

Share the fun - Please feel free to send us information on events not listed here, so we can add them to the list!

HISTORICAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Why this list? Because I will never forget the feeling of driving up a hill in Italy towards a small town early one evening in the late '70s, and passing lots of people in historical costumes heading home. Had we known there was a historical faire in that town that day, we could have, and would have, gone to it. I hope this helps you avoid missing an event you would have liked to attend! Coryn PS. Unless otherwise noted, I'm the "I" in the listings below. Please feel free to email me with info on other events you think people reading our site might like to know about.

Help!

Several of us here at Medieval Miscellanea are currently planning a trip to France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany. In 2011 we hope to go to Spain and Portugal, then possibly the Balkan states (Croatia, etc.). In 2013 it's Germany (200th anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig – ok, it's Napoleonic, but a good excuse for a trip!) Any suggestions for those countries gratefully received.

** means we've been there, or someone who has gave us the info.*

The year we were at a event, or learned of it, are in parenthesis in each listing. Please be so kind as to tell us of events you think should be on our list. This list does NOT include places that, without a festival or other event, is interesting to go to – for that you must go to the Interesting Places to Travel To page.

We can't list every historical event held in the world, and believe that those visiting this website have specific interests. Thus this list is limited to those events that touch on European history c. 500-1650 A.D. The events listed may be huge, or small. They may be historically correct reenactments of past events (cf Landshutter Hochzeit in July), or "Renaissance Faires" (Renfaire) which bear only a passing resemblance to actual history. We cannot list every Renfaire and there are sites that do, so there are relatively few listed here. A good place to begin searching for other Renfares, especially in the U.S., would be the Renaissance Herald magazine (for the U.S. only), or the internet (check out www.renaissancemagazine.com/fairelist.html) There are a few festivals mentioned that aren't in historical garb – either they are so interesting we thought you might like them anyway, or we were told they were historical but they aren't (like Bad Durkheim in Germany, in September). The Web is a good place to check for other events check sites like www.whatsonwhen.com/. Unfortunately, national tourist boards have seldom proved useful for us.

Check and double-check, as all too often there is an event with a wonderful name promising the sort of event we like – but the name is simply a remnant from a vanished past, and the event as held nowadays is very modern. But sometimes not. It's worth asking about – I was told the Horse Fair in Fontvieille in France used to be for selling horses, but the name was simply a holdover and the event was now only for antiques. Wrong – yes, there were vendors selling antiques at tables lining the main street, but there was a large area with people selling horses (especially the white Camargue horses), mules, donkeys, carts, carriages, wagons (including gypsy wagons modern and antique), and all sorts of other interesting items offered just as they would have been during the great horse fairs of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Places that are open year-round and restaurants with a medieval theme or shows are usually mentioned on the page with Interesting Places to Visit.

The events that are held several different times a year, or for which we don't have any idea when they are held, are listed at the end of each section. The information was good at the time we got it, but the dates may have changed, the event may no longer be held, or the contact information or website where we got the information may no longer be valid. We advise that you contact all of those events that you are interested in attending well in advance, to see if they are still being held, the exact dates, and to get more information as to what they are like. This is especially true for the older listings (the year at the end of the listing for each event is when we got the information about that event). If you find better information for an event, please let us know so we can update this list. If you know of an interesting event we don't list, please let us know. We have listed the events by date; the European festivals follow the listing for the U.S and Canada

Where " "s are used, it is a translation of the event's name or other information. Much of the information has been directly copied from the event's website or publicity; * before a date means we have been there, or have a first-hand review. Some of the events are near duplicates of each other – for example, the same group that does the "medieval spectacle" at Bernburg at the end of April (detailed description below) also does many of the other "medieval spectacles" around Germany.

A Palio is an Italian event with one or more contests or games, usually pitting one neighborhood, quarter or part of a city against the others. A number of Palios date back to medieval times; a few have been held almost every year since then. Many Palios are held in appropriate costume. Some Palios are well-known, like the jousting at the Moor (a huge quintain) in Arezzo or the horse race (bareback, around the town square) in Siena; the big Palios are well publicized, and the tourist bureau can provide you a list. The big ones may not have much else for you to do or watch besides the main event and some entertainment immediately before it, and/or are usually quite crowded, but can still be well worth attending (I LOVED the Palio in Arezzo, and enjoyed shopping at the antique stalls set up throughout town the same weekend). If you attend a Palio, consider picking a neighborhood and rooting for their contestants; you may end up being "adopted" for a few hours by locals from the neighborhood you are rooting for, as I was in Isolde Duvarresse. But don't get too caught up - I was almost ready to join the rioting at the Palio in Arezzo when "our" rider was unjustly penalized by the judges; he didn't fall off his horse, he was forced off when he struck the quintain perfectly but the quintain stuck and didn't pivot away!!!!). Remember, most foreign police stations and hospitals are in modern buildings, and are not worth visiting – avoid behavior that will take you there.

NOTE: Medieval Festivals & Spectacles may be large or small; none seem as large as the larger US Renfaires. They resemble Renfaires in the US, but there are differences. Most in Europe seem to be more consistent in authentic costuming. Also, many are held in or around medieval or Renaissance buildings, especially castles (ruined or not!), but others are held in fields with the only structures the tents of the fair. We have yet to come across in Europe a permanent site purpose-built for a 12-week Renfaire; there are many of these in the US. Many European festivals are staged to celebrate a particular event, and are held where that event happened. A quick mention - we have yet to see at a US Renfaire several nearly-naked people (they kept their hats on, as was done!) in an authentic wooden bathing tub lined with linen, with wine and food to hand. For a first-hand report on one of these European Spectacles, see the one held at the end of April (2007) at Bernberg, Germany.

We advise checking each event to see exactly what it is, when it is, and what it costs, before going. There are events on this list which are held during multiple months, or only every few years. The timing may even have changed. Check to be sure. Most of the info is cut-and-pasted from info on the web, not based on our personal knowledge.

We haven't listed many of the medieval reenactment events held by the Society for Creative Anachronisms or other reenactment groups, as these are usually for hands-on participation rather than going to watch. Contact these groups directly (see our page on Historical Reenactment Groups) for a listing of events near you or your destination.

US AND CANADA

July

Beginning of July **Val-du-fort, Quebec, Canada.** An encampment of medieval and Renaissance re-enactors (2007)

2nd half of July **Ste-Rose du Nord, Saguenay, Quebec, Canada.** The Festviking or Festivities FjordGard is a Viking festival (seems to be a Viking version of a Renaissance Festival). (2007)

2nd half of July **Compton, Estre, Canada.** Lieu Historique National Louis-Saint-Laurent (2007)

July/August

* Last Saturday in July, through the Sunday two weeks later **Slippery Rock, PA, USA.** At the Pennsic War, up to 14,000 people show up to camp out for part or all of the 2 ½ weeks of the event. These include members of many other groups besides the Society for Creative Anachronisms, who hosts Pennsic. Period costume is required, but in practice this ranges from magnificent, fully-documented masterpieces down to simple “peasant” shirts with a drawstring pants or skirt. Up to 2,000 fighters take the field during the largest battles, and there are plenty of smaller battles, duels, exhibitions, archery, etc. Hundreds of classes on all sorts of subjects are offered, there are theatrical and music performances, and one can dance to live music each evening until the very wee hours. There is plenty for children to do, including the day they storm the castle using water guns and water balloons (when the children win, and they always do they get “loot”). And did I mention the shopping? You can show up at the gate naked (ok, that’s illegal and you’d get a sunburn, but you get the idea) with lots of money, and by the end of the day you can own garb for a hundred days and nights, head to heels, undergarments to capes, including accessories and jewelry; armor and weapons for an army; a Period Paviliontm, lights, furniture, rugs, tapestries, ornaments, cookware, food to cook, etc.; and you can even hire people to fight for you, cook for you, or pull you around in a squire cart rented from Mediaeval Miscellaneatm. There are over a dozen food booths, if you prefer, and local motels if you are not a camper. Something for everyone, a smorgasbord of delights. Caution – Pennsic is addicting; be sure to come by our booth!. (1974)

August

Beginning of August **Quebec, Quebec, Canada** - Event by the Societe d’Histoire in Memoriam, held in the Redoute Daphine, Parc d’l’Artillerie, Quebec, Canada (perhaps during the Fetes de la Nouvelle France, listed below?)
www.sympatico.ca (2007)

Beginning of August **Quebec, Quebec, Canada.** Les Fetes de la Nouvelle France; the festival of New France covers the 17th-18th C. Come in costume! www.web2007.nouvellefrance.qc.ca (2007)

Mid August **La Pocatiere, Quebec, Canada.** Festes Medievales du Kamouraska is a renaissance faire.
www.duchedesaxe.org/festes/ (2007)

Mid August **Abitibi, Quebec, Canada.** Festivities medievales de Duparquet (2007)

Mid August **Saint-Marcellin, Quebec, Canada.** Festes Medieval de Saint-Marcellin is a renaissance faire
www.rimouskiweb.com/feste/ (2007)

End of August **Quebec, Canada.** Festival Celtique de Quebec (2007)

September

Beginning of Sept. **Saint-Columban dans les Laurentides, Quebec, Canada.** La Fete Medieval de Saint-Columban is a medieval festival heavy on equestrian stuff, with some Vikings thrown in. www.fetemedievalesaintcolumban.com (2007)

1st half of Sept. **Ille d'Orleans, Canada.** Event by the Societe d'Histoire in Memoriam, held in the Maison Drouin. www.sympatico.ca (2007)

1st half of Sept. Manoir Globensky, **Saint-Eustache, Quebec, Canada.** The Medieval Festival of Saint-Eustache includes shows including fire-eaters, parades, games, artisans and merchants, etc. They encourage people to come costumed. (2007)

Unknown time of the year

Summer months only? **Forges-du-Saint-Mauice, Quebec, Canada.** Especially on Sundays, they present a variety of attractions, including a military camp, music and dances, etc. from the early days of Quebec. (2007)

?, June **Mona, Utah.** The Young Living Lavender Farm has, among other attractions, a medieval village and jousting tournaments. www.younglivingpark.com (2007)

? **Montreal, Quebec, Canada.** The Salon de la Passion Medievale et Historique was held in the hippodrome in 2007. This annual? event is for those interested in some aspect of history of the Middle Ages (and Renaissance?) in Europe and Nouvelle-France ("New France") in Quebec. Events in 2007 included music, theater, combat, and over 100 merchants offering appropriate wares. The same group offered a Salon du Cadeau ("gifts") Medieval et Historique which was to be held in December. (2007)

EUROPE

January

Early January **Ronse, Belgium.** The Bommelsfeesten (Festival of Fools) is a traditional festival, with its masked characters called Bommels. www.ronse.be (2010)

March

End of March Schloss Wildeck, 09405 **Zschopau, Germany.** "medieval spectacle". www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

March-April

Just before Easter **Spain** had a number of religious rites and practices during the Middle Ages and Renaissance that were later declared "heretical" and forbidden – but not all of them have been totally stamped out. Los Empalados (The Impaled ones) and Los Picaos are two of these, and both are held annually during Holy Week before Easter. Los Empalados is held in **Valverde de la Vera** on Maundy Thursday, where during the day there is a recreation of the procession to Calvary. But in the evening Los Empalados are lead through the town – this is a group (of men, I assume) with their arms outstretched as if they are crucified; each has two swords tied to his back(?). Los Picaos is held in **San Vicente de la Sonsierra** on both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, as part of the Semana Santa processions. Members of the Religious Brotherhood of Holy Penitence, one of the local religious guilds, dress in white hoods with eye slits and white habits that leave the back bare. They then scourge themselves with a flax whip embedded with fragments of glass. Very period, very dramatic, very bloody. (2009).

Easter Sunday **Florence, Italy**. Every year, perfectly sane Florentine citizens gather in the Piazza del Duomo to watch a dove-shaped rocket, called the "Colombina", fly out of the famous Duomo and ignite a huge wooden cart-structure, or carro, in the square outside. Today the ceremony still bears a strong resemblance to the way in which it has been celebrated for centuries. In the morning, the Carro (pulled by two white oxen) leaves from Via del Prato for the Piazza del Duomo, accompanied by costumed revelers, city officials and clerical representatives. The holy fire, still started with the historical shards of the Holy Sepulchre, is lit in the Church of SS Apostoli and transported to the Duomo, where the archbishop of the city lights the sacred Colombina rocket with it, during the Easter Mass. The rocket travels out of the Duomo along a wire, sets fire to the huge array of fireworks attached to the Carro and returns back into the church the way it came. (2009)

April

1st half of April Burgruine Regenstein, 38889 **Blankenburg, Germany**. "Vikings at the ruins of Burg Regenstein" (see also the knight's tourney held here in the 2nd half of July). www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

Mid April Burg Rabenstein, 09106 **Chemnitz, Germany**. "Medieval spectacle" (see also the Viking event held here in the 1st half of October). www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

Mid April Schloss , 07508 **Ronneburg, Germany**. "Medieval spectacle". www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

Mid April Schloss, 08491 **Netzschlau, Germany**. "Knights tournament at the castle". www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

Mid April **Hampton Court Palace, England**. Hampton Court Palace's kitchens turn out sumptuous royal feasts fit for a demanding king. Watch typical Tudor dishes being created before your hungry eyes then served to Henry VIII and Queen Katheryn, lords, ladies, bishops, ministers, soldiers and servants. This may have been a one-time event, held during the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII's coronation. (2009)

Mid April **Morpeth, England**. The Northumbrian Gathering celebrates ancient local traditions over three days each spring. There are concerts, singarounds, a barn dance, storytelling, street theatre and the Border Cavalcade, which re-enacts the return of Lord Greystoke from the Battle of Otterburn in 1388. Led by Border half-long pipers, the Cavalcade leaves Morpeth Rugby Club at around 10.45am and arrives at the Town Hall at 11am, to be welcomed by the costumed Morpeth Gadgy (the Town Bailiff) and the Mayor of Castle Morpeth. A children's pageant follows and, with much flag-waving and rosette-presenting, street performers take over for the rest of the day. Musical events start with the Friday night Muckle Mingle concert. Other annual favorites include the Barn Dance, a storytellers' garden and various competitions encompassing music (both vocal and instrumental), dancing, dialect, writing, craft and orienteering. Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering Website (2009)

2nd half of April Schonburg, 06618 **Naumburg, Germany**. "Medieval spectacle at the Schonburg" . www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

* End of April Schloss, 06406 **Bernburg, Germany**. "Knight's tournament and medieval spectacle at the castle". In 2007, this was like a very small traveling Renfaire, set up for 4 days in the large courtyard of a castle. Lots of fun, food and drink; great music by a Celtic Rock group, and others; interesting shopping at perhaps a dozen merchants; with a few tents and some shelters over the sales tables. There was a small but nice "tourney" of demonstrations of 4 styles of horsemanship in various contests, performed by the Arab, the Woman, the Handsome Snob, and the Drunk (the comic relief, and by necessity the most skilled rider). These competitions included archery at a gallop; two people tilting at the same ring at the same time, from opposite sides; and riding through fire. Some unexpected touches – a hand-operated, rope-hung, reversing carousel, and a proper sheet-lined wooden bath tub in an open-sided tent, complete with bathers eating, drinking, playing cards on a board across the tub, etc. (in the evening, the bathers were authentically nude except for their hats). www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

End of April **Salisbury, England**. The life of England's patron saint, shrouded in legend, is celebrated each year in the historic town of Salisbury with street theatre, pageantry, dancing, wandering minstrels and ferocious dragons! The story we know today of Saint George and the Dragon dates from the troubadours of the 14th century. In the story, a dragon is terrorizing the villages near Silena, in Libya. Lots are drawn in local villages, and maidens are fed to the dragon to keep the peace. Saint George kills the dragon with a single blow from his lance, and then converts the locals to Christianity. Salisbury boasts numerous references to St George in and around the city, including The Old George Mall, the George and Dragon pub and Gilbert the Dragon - a flower dragon who comes out in the summer months. Salisbury Cathedral bears a statue of St George with a dragon's head, and he is even depicted in one of the cathedral's stained glass windows. Free (2009)

End of April, usually April 30th **Walpurgisnacht** is an experience, a remnant from the Middle Ages and much earlier. Think Halloween crossed with Oktoberfest. The best celebrations are in **the Harz Mountains**, especially at the Hexentanzplatz (witch's dance place), a famous flat rock above the resort of Thale. There the devil greets the witches who have arrived on brooms, pitchforks, goats and pigs, and then weds the prettiest of them. * **Alsfeld**, a medieval town with 400 half-timbered houses, also has a good Walpurgis celebration. (2007)

30 April **Czech Republic**. Marking the end of winter, Witches' Night or Poleni carodejnic involves an effigy of a hag or witch burning on top of hills across the Czech Republic. In **Prague** the wired but compelling spectacle takes place on Petrin hill. The ritual attracts locals and tourists alike, and the daring may even attempt to jump over the flames. (2007)

? April **Crannog, Scotland**. Do you think that going back to the Iron Age at the Scottish Crannog Centre means fossils, rocks and smelly savages? Think again - they have delicacies that would make Nigella Lawson's mouth water and Jamie Oliver's knees go weak, as the pungent aroma of Celtic spit-roast at this food and drink festival testifies. The festival's prehistoric cooking demonstrations feature a spit-roast, pit cooking, bread-baking and other ancient techniques, local smoked meats, dairy products and tasty herb and nut dishes, all washed down with authentic beverages. (2009)

April-May

30 April & 1 May **Minehead, England**. A hobby horse rampages through the town, then battles the "town horse". The festivities start on "warning night", the night before 1 May (unless that day falls on a Sunday, in which case it's held on the Saturday). (2009)

End of April/early May **Orleans, France**. The Orleanais celebrate the festival of their heroine Joan of Arc, with festivities and costumed participants. (2010)

Spring

* Spring **Karlovy Vari, Czech Republic**. In the spring of 1995 there were medieval re-enactors having an event in one of the city squares, right by the river. No idea if that is an annual event. (1995)

* Spring **Prague, Czech Republic**. In the spring of 1995 there was a medieval faire held in center of town. No idea if this is an annual event. (1995)

* Spring **Grazzano Visconti, Italy** - they hold a very interesting childrens' Palio in this recreated medieval village. The activities include games, lessons on flag-tossing and archery, story-telling, and a quest (in armor!) throughout the village with King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, and Sir Lancelot (several adventures happen; watch the witch defeat the two men, and Guinevere show the children how to defeat the witch). It's great fun; there are probably other events during the year. www.grazzano.org (2003)

* Spring **Isolda Duvaressa, Italy** – this is a Palio, heavily attended by the people of the town but almost no strangers. It recreates the festivities when Isolda Duvaressa married (yes, the town was renamed in her honor!) Everyone involved and half those attending wore a costume, and most of these were accurate (as far as I could see, and trust me, I was looking!). Those of the upper classes were splendid, even magnificent. The town square was surrounded on 2 sides by grandstands, from which I watched a procession of dignitaries and notables into and around the square and then onto the raised dais, while being wonderfully mocked by several fools. Then the scheduled entertainment began. Besides the fools roaming about and interjecting themselves into what was going on, this included a chicken race (live chickens raced by noble young women, very funny and even exciting!), men racing on stilts, and a ball game pitting 3 young men with balls against one with a bucket (fast, furious, and even dangerous, as well as funny!). I had a scarf to wave in the colors of one of the neighborhoods competing, and found myself taken under the wing of a family from that neighborhood despite a lack of understanding of each other's language (picture me pantomiming wringing the neck of "our" chicken, who sat down and wouldn't move). There was plenty to do once the formal entertainment was over. The rest of the town center was decorated appropriately, straw was strewn on the cobbles, and huge fire pits and barrels were set alight as it got dark. One could buy appropriate wares from merchant stalls, and appropriate food and drink at temporary courtyard taverns and permanent restaurants alike. There were games to play, including gambling games; many of these I have never seen before or since, but played with great enjoyment. I could only stay a few hours, and deeply regretted missing most of the evening entertainment, including the display of fire-eating, fire-jumping, and fire-works. (2003)

* Spring **Fontvielle, France** Ok, it's not exactly a historic reenactment, although it's been held since the Middle Ages. But the Horse Fair is lots of fun. I was told that the name was just a holdover from the past when horses had been sold at the fair, but that it was now an open-air antiques fair along the main street of the town, with no horses. Wrong! There were hundreds of horses, from ponies to draft animals, plus mules and donkeys. There were plenty of Camargue horses, from the famous ancient white breed that lives in the surrounding salt marshes. Add carriages, wagons, gypsy wagons, tack, horse-related clothing, etc. so yes, it is a real horse fair! The antiques were also fun. Squint, and you can almost see what it was like at a medieval horse market and fair. It's just down the road from the fortified abbey of Montmajour, site of the Holy Cross pardon pilgrimage established in the 12th C.

Spring through Fall

Mid-April to Mid-September **Clemenceaux, France** (near Vendee?). Ok, it's a commercial theme park, but it sounds like a lot of fun! The Grand Parc Puy du Fou reproduces the eras and events from history that are of the most interest - namely the violent parts. Reconstructions include a Gallo-Roman Amphitheatre with chariot-racing, a fortress complete with pillaging Vikings and a medieval castle under siege. The shows are spectacular - for example the castle moves to show the audience both attackers and defenders. At night, the bloodthirsty action gives way to the more sedate Cinéscénie - a show involving 1000 actors, equestrian displays and ballet. History has never been so appealing. (2010)

The Puszta (the Great Plains), Hungary. Check for dates of any particular event – most are held during late spring to early fall. Note that the displays of horsemanship showing how the riders and their horses would lay down to hide, then spring up to ride away, are done with a saddle that has stirrups but no girth strap. At a number of places you can see a traditional show of horsemanship, including the Puszta Post - a man standing on the back of 2 horses while driving another 3-8 (the traditional garb worn by the riders allegedly dates back to the Renaissance). One such show is "combined with historical hussar and mounted artillery shows". Another place offers "dramatically staged war show from the time of the Magyar Settlement (mounted archery, fire jumping, disc shooting)... camps demonstrating the handicrafts special to the mounted archers". Horse war games, night riding shows and even a donkey show are listed. You can attend a school teaching mounted archery, spear throwing, sword fighting, customs and crafts from the time of the Hungarian Conquest, not to mention learn about the life of the Kuns and the Hussars. Or learn military riding. Stay in thatched buildings or yurts, if you like, or the site of a medieval Hungarian village. Attend a goulash feast or Gypsy

show or party, a peasant wedding or folk-dance show (or attend a folk-dance school!) . Shop in a “handicraft yard” . The **Csomor** Festival includes a horse competition and a grape harvest ball (no idea if this is historical). **Hortobagy** has the Hortobagy Equestrian Festival, the National Goulash Competition and the herdsman’s convention. **Lajosmizse** has the Puszta Olympics and the Great Plains Horse Show. **Kaposmero** has two international mounted archery competitions (May and September); this appears to be in historical garb, with pavilions in the background of the picture we saw. **Papa** is the center for the 7th Hussar Regiment of Papa, and hosts the Historical Games of Papa as well as other riding competitions. **Taltos** has a “Taltos (Magic Horse) Day” (sic!). The Arpad Era Archeological Park in **Kisrozvagy** recreates a living village from the 9th C., and offers many hands-on activities, including crafts, and some involving horses. The castle in **Sumeg** has an exhibit of the Transdanubian Hussar Association, and apparently does demonstrations or shows in appropriate garb. These and other events were listed in a booklet called On Horseback in Hungary - equestrian centers, riding schools, available from the Hungarian Tourist Bureau. See also the info for Winter. (2005)

May

1 May **Cerne Abbas, England**. Get up close and personal with the Cerne Abbas Giant during this ancient May Day celebration. Traditionally the Wessex Morris Men dance on the mighty chalk figure at the crack of dawn before celebrations in the village of Cerne Abbas. The Cerne Giant is a 180-foot carving of a man sprawled across a Dorset hillside, hewn in wide trenches of chalk. It also happens to be the world's only protected historical landmark with a 26-foot erection. The giant and the Maypole mound above his head have marked a fertility power place since ancient times, and his name probably derives from the Celtic fertility god, Cernunnos. The deep trenches cut into the chalk rock have been maintained by generation after generation of locals since at least the 2nd millennium BC. Maypole dancing was a fixture at the site until 1635, when Christian authorities finally suppressed such pagan festivals. In Victorian times the chalk trenches of the penis were filled with dirt and hidden beneath grass. Nowadays the original outline is back on full display, and continues to attract scores of visitors. A sightline taken up the giant's penis on May Day points directly at the sun as it rises over the crest of the hill. The Giant has legendary power to help childless couples, and they still seek the help of the local White Witch, who performs ceremonies around certain parts of the Giant's form. As well as mystical types, the Wessex Morris Men dance on the Giant as the dawn breaks, snaking their way back down to dance in the village square, followed by a well-earned breakfast at a designated pub - just follow the crowds. (2009)

1 May **Padstow, England** has” ‘obby ‘oss Celebrations” on May Day. (2009)

Beginning of May **Hastings, England**. Jack-in-the-Green Morris Dancing Festival brings danceres from near, far and even abroad. Many of the traditions and dance steps are period. The programme includes live music and a big ceilidh, a celebration church service, the crowning of The Queen of the May, a procession through the town to the castle and the symbolic slaying of Jack on the stage so that the Spirit of the Summer can be released. (2009)

* Beginning of May **Upton-upon-Severn, England**. The Riverfest is a Morris dancing festival, music festival, and more. Ever seen Goth morris dancing? I saw it there, along with troupes weaing varied traditional garb, as well as military uniforms and other styles, I’d love to see the SCA enter a troupe, wearing mail (no need for bells) and using real swords... Many of the traditions and dance steps are period. The programme includes live music and a big ceilidh. (2009)

Beginning of May **Caravaca de la Cruz, Spain**. The Festival of the Holy Cross includes a race by horses wearing beautifully embroidered coats and bearing barrels of wine. They race from the bottom of the town up to the castle, led by a porter on each side, who must run as fast as their legs can carry them. The tradition dates back to around 1250, when templar knights raced across territory ruled by the Moors to bring wine to those that guarded the relic of the True Cross (Vera Cruz), kept in this town since 1231. During the rest of the five-day festival, locals celebrate at processions and historical re-enactments of the Moors and Christians throughout the town. (2009)

First Thursday of May **Cocullo, Italy**. The people of Cocullo give thanks to their patron Saint Domenico in a somewhat unusual manner - they drape him in live snakes. Saint Domenico is said to protect Cocullo's inhabitants from snakebites and toothache, and he is honored with a special church service at the beginning of the day's festivities. At around midday his statue is brought out of the church and into the piazza, where the serpari (snake catchers) cover it with snakes and other reptiles. How the snakes twine is interpreted as the year's fortune for the town. Still covered in snakes, the statue is then carried by the serpari through the streets. The procession, accompanied by church bells and firecrackers, is led by the town's clergy and girls whose costumes bear ciambelle, a type of doughnut made especially for the celebration. The festivities continue well into the afternoon and the braver visitor can even have their picture taken with snakes draped around their head and neck. In medieval times the snakes were then burnt in a rather gruesome pyre set up outside the village church. (2009)

Beginning of May **Bari, Italy**. The Festa di San Nicola re-enacts the arrival by sea of the body of Saint Nicholas from Turkey in 1087.

The first Sunday of May, and the following Saturday **Randwick, England**. First there are traditional, very odd happenings with cheeses, including men racing down a very steep hill after a rolling cheese (there are often injuries). * The following Saturday, Randwick has the Randwick Wap - originally a medieval weapons inspection for the men of the town, now a festiva with rolling cheeses (no dangerous racing), some people in garb and a very nice medieval band of musicians. (2009)

Beginning of May 04425 **Taucha, Germany** – “medieval spectacle”, which in 2007 listed a Knight's combat of fame and glory, with the Black Knights; also a trapeze artist, dancers, singers, and a band. www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

2nd Sunday in May, but only in even-numbered years **Ypres (aka Leper), Belgium**. The Kattenstoet (or Kattestoet), the Festival of the Cats, is a parade and celebration of a medieval tradition. Seems the people in charge of storing wool in the upper floors of the Cloth Hall would get cats to keep the mice and rats away over the winter; in spring, after the wool was sold and their job was done, the cats were thrown from the belfry tower of the Cloth Hall to the town square below. This supposedly symbolized the killing of evil spirits. This ended in 1817, but was revived in 1955 with a jester tossing stuffed toy cats from the Cloth Hall belfry down to the crowd, with individuals trying hard to catch one. This is followed by a mock witch burning and a fake cat-and-dog fight, to round out the jollity. (2010)

Mid May **Bruges, Belgium** For centuries the Procession of the Holy Blood has been depicting arresting and moving scenes from the Old and New Testament. The procession's roots go back to 1291! Pictures show people in period garb. (2010)

Mid May **Sedan, France**. Festival Medieval de Sedan, at the largest fortification in Europe. Sounds like a Renfaire. (2010)

Mid May Burg Kriebstein, 09648 **Kriebstein, Germany**. “Medieval spectacle at Burg Kriebstein” www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

Mid May 09429 **Wolkenstein, Germany**. “Castle festival” www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

? May (Whit Sunday, 7 weeks after Easter) **St. Briavels, England**. Each year the small village plays host to the Bread and Cheese Dole. This tradition, dating back to the 12th C., sees crowds of medieval-costumed locals converge outside the local Saint Mary's Church in eager anticipation of catching “dole”, pieces of bread and cheese that are thrown into the air from brimming baskets. There are no rules in this battle - women hoist restricting skirts and men pull out extraordinarily large hats to ensure they receive more than their fair share. Much of it ends up as ammo and even the pastor gets pelted, although others preserve them for good luck (miners originally used them as charms to protect against accidents). * While in town, stay at the youth hostel in King John's hunting castle if possible, and take the guided tour. (2009)

3rd weekend of May **Brandenburg, Germany**. The Rolandfest celebrates Charlemagne's premier knight. Jugglers and other medieval characters, tournaments, ancient crafts on display, and a lively procession. (2007)

End of May 04626 **Burg Posterstein (bei Gera), Germany**. "Knight's tourney and medieval spectacle at the Burg Posterstein". www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

End of May **Leeds Castle, England**. Heralded by resounding fanfares and the thunder of galloping hooves, knights stage dramatic battles on horseback twice daily. Daredevil stunts, falls and fights are all part of this spectacular jousting contest held in the grounds of Leeds Castle. The event also features games to test each knight's courage and skill, as well as medieval giants that keep kids amused with their antics. Tudor-themed activities include cannon drill, archery practice and mini jousts for children. Visitors even got to meet Henry VIII in 2009. (2009)

? May **Mons, France** (there are 3 Mons in France – be sure you check which one!). Beware of the dragon if you attend The Procession of the Golden Chariot, also known as the Doudou. The townsfolk pull the chariot around town, a tradition dating back to 1380. In the Battle of Lumecon, Saint George saves innocent bystanders dragon's wrath. As the dragon is finally slain by a last pistol shot from Saint George, the participants rush into the courtyard roaring out a triumphant: "The people of Mons shall never perish!" and the city is made safe for another year. (2010)

? May **Rothenburg, Germany**. During the 30 Years War in the 17th C. a townsman allegedly saved Rothenburg from being destroyed by betting the commander of the besieging army that he could drink 6 pints of wine at one drink. The Meistertrunk (master drink) is re-enacted with thousands of costumed townspeople and horses. (2007)

? May **Kaposmero, Hungary** has two international mounted archery competitions (May and September); this appears to be in historical garb, with pavilions in the background of the picture we saw. (2007)

May to September

* Every Tuesday morning from May to mid-September **Totnes, England**. The Totnes Elizabethan Society runs a costumed charity market in the Civic Hall forecourt. There is also a Collector's Fair/Flea Market, and an open-air crafts faire at Vire Island.

June

Weekends in June **Sedan, France**. Falconry exhibitions at the castle. (2010)

Beginning of June **King's Lynn, England**. This recreation of Tudor times takes place at Oxburgh, a 15th-century, moated manor house near King's Lynn with attractive gardens and woodland walks. The displays in the house include embroidery created by Mary, Queen of Scots, during her captivity. Activities at the festival centre around an important household of the 1580s as it responds to the war with Spain, and there are lots of characters in Tudor costume to meet. Visit the apothecary and the barber-surgeon as you peer into the murky past, but save your strength for the dancing and a pike drill later on. Repeated at the end of September. (2009)

2nd Sunday of June **Tournai, France** Day of the Four Processions,. The highlight of the annual parade is a procession of giants representing historical characters, including King Childeric of the Franks and France's King Louis XIV. (2010)

Beginning of June 07973 **Greiz, Germany**. "Medieval spectacle at the upper castle". www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

Beginning of June 16909 **Wittstock, Germany**. "Historical spectacle of the 30 Years War". www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

1st half of June 07922 **Tanna, Germany**. "775 year celebration at the market square" (held in 2007 – may not be an annual festival). www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

Mid June 03046 **Cottbus, Germany**. “Town festival in the inner town”. www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

2nd half of June Osterburg, 07570 Weida, Germany. “Medieval spectacle at the Osterburg” www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

End of June 07907 **Schleiz, Germany**. “775 year celebration at the castle towers” (held in 2007 – may not be an annual festival). www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

? June **Gloucester, England**. The city centre is transformed into a medieval village as the Westgate Association stages its annual Medieval Fayre. With more than 60 stalls selling everything from wooden beer tankards, English wines and ciders to local fruit and vegetables, as well as street performers and demonstrations, this is an entertaining day. Visitors can learn archery, try squiring training and see a battle re-enactment on the Cathedral Green. Don't forget to try the roast pig and a drop of mead! Free. (2009)

? June **Chester, England** St Werburgh's Festival celebrates the anniversary of a Mercian princess who became a nun, then Abbess. Viking re-enactments, art exhibitions, pilgrimage walks, open-air theatre performances, lectures and parades are all part of the fun. (2009)

? June **Chester, England**. This spectacular Midsummer Watch Parade, with its giants, beasts, animated tableaux and costumed characters, is one of the oldest and most colorful in the country. Dating from 1498, it features the unique Chester family of giants. In Medieval and Tudor times, Chester's parade was renowned throughout the country. First held during the mayoralty of Richard Goodman in 1498, it was organized by the City Guilds. The outstanding features of the show were the giants - enormous structures made of buckram and pasteboard and carried by two or more men. Giants were a common feature of Tudor pageantry in England and Europe, but Chester was unique in that the city paraded a whole family - the father, the mother and two daughters. There were also (and still are) fantastic giant beasts including a unicorn, an elephant, a camel and a dragon. Today the parade is created with help from the local community, volunteers and schoolchildren. If you're in Chester at this time, you can't miss it. Free (2009)

? June **Hafnarfiordur, near Reykjavik, Iceland** The International Viking Festival, held in the Viking Village, has displays of ancient arts and crafts, stalls and demonstrations of all sorts. There is even a feast (and a Viking Hotel, we understand!). (2009)

? June **Tarascon, France**. The four-day Fête de la Tarasque commemorates a legend concerning a dragon that once haunted the town. Only Sainte Marthe, who came to evangelize Tarascon, could soothe the terrifying beast. Today the miracle is marked with street entertainment and concerts. (2007)

? June **Tubingen, Germany**. The Stocherkahn races have 30 or so flat punts powered with a long pole being raced on the Neckar River, including around an island and under a low bridge. The crews are forbidden to bail the boat with anything but their hands, and the last boat in must drink a restorative tonic of cod liver oil! The low bridge is the downfall of many a team. The race may date to the Renaissance, and some teams wear costumes.

June/July

* For 3 weeks in June and July, every 4 years (some sources say every 3 years) – next time in 2013? **Landshut, Germany**. The Landshutter Hochzeit (Landshutter Wedding) recreates the magnificent wedding in 1475 of George, the son of Duke Ludwig the Rich to the Polish princess Jadwiga (Hedwig in German). The original wedding was extensively documented at the time, complete to who attended, what they did, and descriptions of what they wore. From the Emperor, Crown Prince, Princess Jadwiga, various Dukes and Duchesses, and other nobles to the townsfolk and peasants, they are all re-enacted here. The street plays, the processions, the recreation of the negotiations and the wedding joust, meeting the Emperor wandering around the town (I offered to hold that hot, heavy velvet and ermine coat for him, but he declined...), buying a meal cut off the pig on the spit in the period open-air kitchens – you can't get more authentic than this. They have almost 100 years experience in putting on this event, and spare no effort –the

ermine on the Emperor's robes are real, and the horses that pull the recreation of the Princess's carriage (more like a covered wagon!) come from the same stud farm as did the original horses. 2,300 townsfolk take part, and girls grow their hair long just to be eligible to compete to be Princess Jadwiga. The town still has most of its late medieval buildings and layout, and even the shop windows get into the spirit (check out the apothecary window at the pharmacy, and the modern manikins wearing Renaissance garb in the department store windows). An experience not to be missed. www.landshut.de (1977/2007)

First Thursday in July and the preceding Tuesday (which may be in June) **Brussels, Belgium** The Ommegang dates from the 13th Century, with the city guilds, magistrates, and nobles honoring the Virgin Mary. Now-a-days 1,400 people participate, wearing period costume from the time of the "joyous entry" of Emperor Charles V into Brussels in 1549. The parade is escorted by a mounted cavalcade and people waving medieval banners; there are speeches and a spectacle with light and sound (narrated in both French and Flemish). A whole medieval village will be created, with free entry for everyone. Catapults firing candies and Knights combating on foot are some of the activities that will combine history with pleasure over the three days event. (2010)

? June /July **Florence, Italy** Testosterone abounds when four teams of 27 youths apiece face each other during the Historic Football, or Calcio Storico, a 15th-century style tournament of fighting and football in Florence's Piazza Santa Croce. The game itself is said to originate from an ancient Roman ball sport, which became a Florentine speciality in the golden age of the Tuscan capital. Once the sport of princes and noblemen, who used its violence to prove their own skill and strength (for the benefit of the watching damsels), it is now fiercely fought between young men of the four Florentine quarters: San Giovanni, Santa Maria Novella, Santo Spirito and Santa Croce. Clad in medieval garters and pantaloons, players seem more preoccupied with attacking each other than putting the ball anywhere, though the rules of Calcio Storico in themselves are fairly complex. The aim is to seize the ball and put it in the net (which runs the entire width of the pitch) by whatever means available. Precision is everything, as misses and interceptions provide points for the other team. The winners are rewarded with a mass of steaks equivalent in weight to the more traditional prize of a white calf or bistecca fiorentina, which was historically butchered for the occasion. Great entertainment for enthusiastic spectators, but a pitch invasion is probably a bad idea. Please note that in 2007 the event was cancelled and we have no details on the next edition. Please keep an eye on the Calcio Storico website for updates. (2010)

? June/July **Kaltenberg Castle, Geltendorf, Germany**. The Kaltenberger Ritterturnier is a medieval knight's tournament put on by the professional members of a celebrated international troupe of firm stuntmen. In addition, for 3 weeks there is a colorful medieval marketplace with jugglers, jesters, acrobats, fortune tellers, fire eaters, troubadours and minstrels, lords, ladies, peasants, and more. The merchants include coin-makers, puppeteers, glass-blowers, book printers, wax-chandlers and candle-dippers, and many more, most of whom demonstrate their craft. (2007)

June – August or "Summer"

Wed & Sat., June - August **Amboise, France**. The chateau is the backdrop for the celebration of the court of François I, in all its pageantry and splendor. Locals gather to bring to life the masquerades and performances devised for the King of France. A spectacle of sounds, lights, fireworks, costumes, plays, jousting and equestrianism, music and Renaissance dances, drinking sprees, battles, weddings and feasting. (2010)

Summer **Sete, Frontignan, St. Mandier-sur-Mer & surrounding coastal areas, France**. Water jousting supposedly originated with the crusaders waiting at Aigues-Mortes to embark for the Holy Land; when nearby Sete was founded in 1666, a water tournament was held. Nowadays it's HUGE in Sete, and tournaments are held all summer, culminating in the 5-day St. Louis festival. This is more aggressive than the water jousting held in Ulm (see the listing in July/August), as the boat crews are larger (including musicians!), the drop to the water farther, and the winners become town heroes (prodigies often get public service jobs). Injuries are not uncommon. The regional paper runs a weekly jousting page; in Sete, a council seat is in charge of overseeing the sport, and a section of the town museum is dedicated to it. Children

in the area start learning to joust as young as 3, on skateboards until they learn to swim. Unfortunately, unlike in Ulm (see July/August), here the “costume” is all-white modern clothing. (2008)

Mid July **Locronan, France.** The Tromeie or Petite Tromeie is one of the oldest pardons (religious days) in Brittany. Pilgrims in costume, carrying gold brocaded, silk banners and singing Breton songs, begin a procession through the Locronanaise countryside to a sacred forest clearing, Le Nemeton. This Christian rite overlays much older Celtic traditions. The natural temple in the middle of the forest has been a pagan site of worship for centuries, dedicated to nature and fertility. The sacred places of Nemeton consist of 12 different sites spread throughout the forest over a dozen kilometers. The ceremony is a serpentine procession from one site to the other via corn fields, across makeshift bridges and streams, ending at Locronan mountain. Once every six years (the next one is in 2013), la Grande Troméie takes place, covering not the usual 6km route of the Petite Troméie but a double distance of 12km. The procession involves thousands of pilgrims, who carry maroon and gold banners and wear crosses. (2010)

Mid July 07982 **Elsterberg, Germany.** “Medieval spectacle at the castle ruins”. www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

2nd half of July Regenstein, 38889 **Blankenburg, Germany.** “Knight’s tournament at the Regenstein” (see also the Viking event held here during the 1st ½ of April). www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

22 July **Anguiano, Spain.** The rural town celebrates its patron saint day (Mary Magdalene) on 22 July. For some, the fiesta takes place half a meter (20”) off the ground - the ones performing the Danza de los Zancos (Stilt Dance). After mass, half a dozen or so of the devotees that escort the saint around the town whirl and wheel to the sound of bagpipes and drums, perched on stilts. They skillfully man oeuvre up and down flights of stone steps in a dance that is thought to date back to the 15th century. The stilt dance returns to Anguiano on the last Saturday in September, when Saint Mary Magdalene goes back into isolation for the winter. Free (2010)

End July Schloss, 08371 **Glauchau, Germany.** “Medieval spectacle at the castle”. www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

? July **Bayeux, France.** The Medieval Festival fills the town with crazy jesters, acrobats, jugglers, fair damsels and brave knights. Highlights include a medieval market, street performances, concerts, parades and a dramatic medieval ball. If the mayhem makes you thirsty, the taverns all serve medieval-sized tankards of beer and hearty meals. (2010)

? July **Tewkesbury, England.** The Tewkesbury Medieval Festival or Fayre is free, and includes the re-enactment of the battle of Tewkesbury - way back in 1471, with hosts of armored participants. Tewkesbury is a very old market town in Gloucestershire with some fine historical monuments, set in some beautiful countryside. Seeing the town in its medieval clothes, so to speak, is well worth your while. The event is organized by the Companions of the Black Bear - far from being a medieval guild, they are simply a group of locals who decided in 1985 that it was time to spice up summertime in Tewkesbury. The result? A re-enactment of one of the decisive battles of the Wars of the Roses regularly attended by 10,000 people, 110 traders and 2000 warriors in authentic dress. (2010)

? July **Dinkelsbuhl, Germany.** During the 30 Years War in the 17th C. the town’s children saved it from destruction by begging the attackers for mercy. For 10 days the Kinderzeche commemorates that.

? July **Ottendorf, Germany.** The Teutonic Pentathlon is not only for Teutons –Vikings go, too. Many are in costume, but it’s not required. You can watch, or even participate in, events like the club throwing, Anglo-Saxon trail (think commando course), or Dieck’n (pushing a wooden card filled with sandbags up the dyke). Join others in the Sack Whomping or the Neck Yank (no hands permitted), or hoist your leader in the Tribal Chief Tote. Not to mention eat, drink, and be merry. (2001)

? July **Berkshire, England.** The annual swan-marking procession along the Thames, carried out in traditional boats and costumes, dates back to medieval times. Since the 12th century the British crown has claimed ownership of all unmarked mute swans (which were originally prized as a luxury banquet food). These days, the Queen only exercises

ownership rights over a short stretch of the Thames and its tributaries, where the Dyers' and Vintners' Livery Companies also retain swan rights. As the cygnets reach the age of about two months, Her Majesty's Swan Marker and a party of skilled lightermen embark in six wooden skiffs, bedecked in colorful traditional costume, into the river at Sunbury, above London, beginning a five-day row upriver to Abingdon, Oxfordshire. The boatmen maneuver to surround the birds, then carefully lift them into the boats for inspection and tagging. In recent years the conservation aspect of this traditional work has loomed ever larger, as increasing river traffic and angling have left birds entangled in fishing line or damaged by collision. These pressures have been counterbalanced by public education efforts and the exertions of swan-rescue volunteers, so that the swan population has stabilized. The slow progress of the skiffs upstream takes them to the following departure points each day: Monday at Sunbury on Thames, Tuesday at Romney Lock, Wednesday at Marlow, Thursday at Sonning on Thames and Friday at Moulsoford. (2009)

? July **Siena, Italy.** For the Sienese, the Palio horse-race around the Piazza del Campo is a matter of life and death. Daring, bravado, lunacy, bribery, poisoning and death-threats have all played their parts in the event since its inauguration in 1310. The race consists of bareback riders making three circuits of the main square (paved in stone!) and is over in 90 seconds, but it is preceded by five hours of flag-throwing acrobatics. For the locals, it is the culmination of an entire year's plotting and scheming, and for visitors it is a spectacular show. The Palio is the banner, decorated with an image of the Virgin Mary, which is presented to the winner of the race. Competitors come from each of the 17 contrade (districts) of the city. To come first crowns you in glory, to come even second is worse than death. For the runner-up, ignominy and shame produce phenomenal rivalries with the winning contrada which can rumble along for years, creating tensions only assuaged when the vanquished win again (or more satisfying, if their rivals lose!). Unless you're a local celebrity or a millionaire, don't bank on getting a bird's eye view of the race - balconies and seats are booked out months in advance. Your best bet is to head for the Campo, stake out a section by the railings and stand your ground. Things can get pretty hot and bothered during the hours leading up to the race, so bring your own refreshments and be patient - it will be worth it in the end. In the evening, wandering the various contradas is fascinating. Those who have lost watch the race over and over in their community centers, drowning their sorrows in grappa. On the other hand, the winning contrada's entire population flock to their local church, where the palio is given pride of place behind the altar. The scenes of jubilation are incredible - firecrackers, brass bands, choirs and dancing grannies abound. Sounds crazy? It is. Don't miss it. (1977/2003)

July/August

3 July – 29 August **Sedan, France.** Tournament of Chivalry (Tournoi de Chevalrie), including a dragon; Sedan, France (2010)

3rd Thursday in both July & August **Loches, France.** Medieval night market. (2010)

? July/August **Forchheim, Germany.** Although it isn't held in costume, St Annafest dates from medieval times and is still held in wooden beer gardens and the medieval stone cellars in the forest of Forchheim. Think of 500,000 people eating bratwurst and drinking beer from the 300+ local breweries while bands and carnival acts entertain. Perhaps an Oktoberfest alternative? www.forchheim.de (2007)

* ? July/August **Ulm, Germany** – During the Middle Ages and Renaissance fishermen used to joust on the Danube, with one man standing on a platform at the back of the boat while one or more people rowed towards the other boat. The last man dry won. The Fischerstechen water jousting tournaments held at Ulm nowadays are great fun, with many of the jousters dressed as historical figures like Charles V, Wallenstein, or Gustavus Adolphus. The year I went, a woman dressed as a medieval fishwife won! There is also a colorful cavalcade along the banks, including musketeers and town militias, jester, peasants, pretty girls, etc. (1978) See also Sete, France under June-August above, for a more intense version of the sport, probably dating back to the Crusaders; and for a very different version of horse-less jousting. (1978)

? July/August **St. Mandier-sur-Mer, France** – Water jousting – see the description for Sete in June-August, above. (2007)

? July/August **Carcassonne, France.** At the annual medieval festival, artists and troubadours, acrobats and fencers, acrobats and more entertain the crowds who throng this incredible walled town, while there will be jousting on the original jousting grounds of the Bastide Saint-Louis (the castle). (2010)

August

1st Sat. in August **Chinon, France.** Medieval market (“Marche Medieval”). (2010)

1st half of August **Amsterdam, The Netherlands** Fantastic Amsterdam. Romans, Celts, knights and highlanders will give demonstrations, including a knights' tournament with horses and lances. There will also be a large medieval market, music, different kinds of medieval entertainment and lots of activities for children.

3rd Sat. in August **Chinon, France.** Marché à l’Ancienne (19th century style market).

? August **Rye, England.** Medieval celebration - lords, ladies, wenches and jesters parade through the town and down to the surrounding salt flats for a 2-day fair with a medieval street market and a longbow tournament.

? August **Totnes, England.** The Orange Race, organized by the Elizabethan Society, commemorates a visit by Sir Frances Drake. He gave a local boy “a fair red orange”; now contestants chase their oranges down the hill. See also the Elizabethan costumed charity market held each Tuesday morning in the summer.

Beginning of August 08209 **Auerbach, Germany** – “Medieval spectacle at the market square”. www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

Beginning of August **Chateaunuef-du-Pape, France.** The villagers dress in medieval guise and stage street parades, performances, and a torch-lit banquet to celebrate the ripening of the grapes. There are also a crafts market and many stalls offering wine tastings.

End of August Burg Eisenhardt, 14806 **Belzig, Germany.** “Medieval spectacle at Burg Eisenhardt”. www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

End **Bad Langensalza, Germany.** The “Middle Ages Town Fest” features entertainment ranging from acrobats to witches, plus 150 craftsmen, etc. www.bad-langensalza.de (2007)

Fall

* Fall? **Many towns in Provence, France.** Provençal-style bullfighting dates back to the Middle Ages, and many towns have built arenas for the sport (some few are still using arenas built by the Romans!). The black bulls are smaller than the Spanish ones, almost tiny, and are not killed, but don’t think they are not fierce - indeed, some become legendary before being retired to stud. I saw a practice session one September in a small town near Arles. When the trumpeters played the fanfare (from Carmen, naturally!) and El Diablo came into the ring, I could hear many in the audience draw in their breath, and no-one was willing to go out to dance with the bull with the twisted horn. I swear, he was taunting the spectators, making dashes at those standing safe behind the barrier around the ring, and when he finally was lured out of the ring, he was snorting with disgust! The fighters go in a team of 6 or more, each either trying to smack the bull on the forehead (or steal a ribbon attached to his horns) without getting gored, or try to distract the bull from chasing a team-mate. Even a practice is exciting, especially if the bull is chasing a fighter and hits the barrier so that he flips over it and everyone between the barrier and the elevated grandstands has to jump into the ring to escape! I watched one bull do this twice in just a few minutes. The bigger ranches that raise the bulls have arenas to train the bulls, and some host

either practices open to the public, or ones specifically geared to tourists. The famous white Camargue horses were also present, but horses are not used in Provencal bull-fighting. (2005)

September

? September **Arles, France.** The Feria du Riz celebrates the rice harvest in the Camargue with Provencal-style bullfighting (see the description under unknown times of year, below). The famous white Camargue horses are also present, but not used in the bull-fighting. (2005)

? September **Lyon, France.** The Festival of the Bird King is an all-night affair with everyone in Renaissance costume. (2005)

1st weekend of September **Rothenburg, Germany** - in 1274 the city became a Free Imperial City. This is celebrated with thousands of costumed townspeople and horses. (2007)

Beginning of September Burg, 08499 **Mylau, Germany.** "Medieval spectacle at the castle". www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

2nd weekend of September **Alsfeld, Germany.** The historic medieval market is a big festival with music, theater, and many handicrafts. www.tca-alsfeld.de (2007)

1st half of September Zitadelle, 13597 **Spandau, Germany.** "Medieval spectacle at the citadel". www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

1st half of September **Ferte Clairbois, France.** The international jousting tournament (2002)

Mid September **Bad Durkheim, Germany.** The Wurstmarkt began during the Middle Ages, and has been held almost 600 times since. It started as a short local pilgrimage to the Michaelisberg in honor of St. Michael, which attracted entertainers and merchants as well as food and wine stalls. Now it's a huge carnival-type fair with games and rides, but still has the wine booths (selling only local wine). No costumes, apparently.

Mid September Schloss Schlettau, 09487 **Schlettau, Germany.** "Medieval spectacle at Schloss Schlettau". www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

2nd half of September Schloss, 08547 **Plauen/Jossnitz, Germany.** "Medieval spectacle at the castle". www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

Last Saturday in September **Anguiano, Spain.** See the listing for 22 July. Free (2010)

End of September **King's Lynn, England.** See the listing for June. (2009)

? September **Kaposmero, Hungary** has two international mounted archery competitions (May and September); this appears to be in historical garb, with pavilions in the background of the picture we saw. (2007)

October

1st half October Burg Rabenstein, 09106 **Chemnitz, Germany.** "Vikings at Burg Rabenstein" (see also the knight's tourney held here in the 1st ½ of April) www.coex-gmbh.de (2007)

Mid October 7610 **Rumes, Belgium.** Horsemanship spectacle with light and sound show in the evening, including a tournament, combat, acrobatic dancing, demonstrations. www.hervezablot.com (2002)

End of October **Gien, France.** “A musical spectacle after a geste of Torold, the Song of Roland. Medieval music both western and arab-andalousian to illustrate the text.” (2002)

Winter

The Puszta (the Great Plains), Hungary. In winter, go for a sleigh ride, or learn to drive one. See also the info for Spring through Fall. (2005)

November

End of November **Saumur, France.** Performance of Renaissance dances (and also mimes!). (2002)

December

December **London, England.** Take a step back in time at the Tower of London's Medieval Palace at Christmas. Visitors can revisit the year 1284 by joining King Edward I and his court for A Medieval Christmas, a lavish feast with jesters and musicians. (2009)

Unknown times of the year

* **Shrewsbury, England.** There was, in 2000, an interactive mystery exhibit at the monastery, for fans of the Brother Cadfael murder mystery series; no idea if it is still being offered. 2000

The Weald and Downland Open Air Museum in Sussex, England has rescued buildings from the 13th C. on, and holds events. We understand they may include medieval/renaissance events.

Carcassone, France. Jousting is done on the original jousting grounds of this historic city.

Castellane, France. The Fete du Petardier commemorates an episode from the Wars of Religion (the 30 Years War). (2005)

Laval, France. The “Pegasiades”, a jousting tournament, was held in the hippodrome here in 2003 (2002)

Montaiguillon, France? We’ve seen very impressive pictures of what appears to be a live-action late medieval melee labeled Rassemblement de Montaiguillon, 1999. The event was almost certainly held in France – perhaps at a place called Montaiguillon? We can’t find such a town listed. (2002)

Simiane la Rotonde, France. Les Riches Heures Musicales de la Rotonde is a festival of ancient music. (2005)

Landshut, Germany hosts a European festival of medieval, Renaissance and Baroque music, every 2 years.

Straubing, Germany. Every 4 years a festival is held in memory of Agnes Bernaurer, a beautiful blacksmith’s daughter who secretly married the son of the Duke of Bavaria. The Duke was not sympathetic to young love –when he found out, he had Agnes convicted as a witch and drowned in the Danube here. 2011, 2015, etc. (2007)

Morostica, Italy stages a re-creation of the living chess game held in 1454 to show the progress of the chess game between two suitors for the hand of Lionora, the daughter of the Governor, Tadeo Parisio.

Sighisoara, Romania. The childhood home of Vlad Dracul (aka Vlad the Impaler), this medieval town has a medieval festival each year, the Festivalul de Arta Medievala Sighisoara. And of course you can also buy stuff about Dracula the Vampire. (2003)

Arbroath, Scotland has a medieval pageant.

Obejo, Spain. Twice a year, the village of Obejo pays homage to its patron saint, San Benito, with the Baile del Patatú (Dance of Patatú). The dance's origin is ambiguous, as it is a strange mixture of secular and Christian traditions. One of the highlights is the infamous sword dance (baile de espadas). After a special mass for the saint, the celebrations move outside the village church. Swordsmen dressed in chap-style trousers, white shirts and red waistbands eagerly dodge and flirt with swords in syncopated rhythm to accordion and tambourine music, carrying out a mock execution of the master of the dance. Sound a lot like traditional English Morris dancing? Although the dance sounds barbaric and pagan, it actually takes on traits of the very traditional and religious San Benito dance. After the spectacle of the mock execution, a statue of San Benito is brought out of the church covered in money, placed there by those who wish to redeem themselves for their sins.